

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 70

2 **48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Phil A. Griego

5
6
7
8
9
10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THAT THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT STUDY SCHOOL
12 CLOSURE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS.

13
14 WHEREAS, local school boards have discretionary power to
15 close local schools without regard to any criteria set forth by
16 state law; and

17 WHEREAS, local school boards have discretionary power to
18 close local schools and sell the buildings with no obligation
19 to make them available for use as charter schools, even if
20 there is substantial and continuing support for such an effort
21 in the neighborhoods affected; and

22 WHEREAS, parents, teachers and other stakeholders in a
23 school district have a vested interest in the board members
24 whom they elect to office; and

25 WHEREAS, local schools boards should be required to look

.169175.1

underscored material = new
[bracketed material] = delete

underscoring material = new
[bracketed material] = delete

1 at and consider heavily the following question: If this school
2 did not exist, would this community be attempting to create
3 it?; and

4 WHEREAS, parents, teachers and other stakeholders in a
5 school district have a vested interest their neighborhood
6 schools, which have educated many generations of families and
7 have been blessed by community fundraising efforts to finance
8 programs and brick and mortar; and

9 WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of public
10 education dollars are expended each year to refurbish, expand
11 and otherwise repair and upgrade neighborhood schools that
12 become targets of closure efforts by local school boards; and

13 WHEREAS, in recent years, local school boards have made
14 closure decisions that are, or are perceived to be, driven by
15 political expediency at best or class prejudice at worst; and

16 WHEREAS, some of the recent closure efforts have been
17 aimed at some of the most academically successful, recently
18 renovated and physically expanded schools with the heaviest
19 parent involvement and support; and

20 WHEREAS, some of these recent closure issues between
21 parent groups and their local school boards have raised
22 concerns over fiscal responsibility, board member ethics and
23 the methods by which boards initiate closures;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
25 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department be

.169175.1

underscored material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

1 requested to study the process and practices of local school
2 boards in the state to determine what works and what does not
3 with regard to local school closures; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
5 department come forth with a proposal to address whether
6 facilities of closed schools should be offered up to charter
7 school efforts; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
9 department study and recommend options to change laws regarding
10 the closure of local schools, taking into consideration recent
11 expenditure of public funds to renovate or expand, parent
12 support of, academic achievement at and attraction of students
13 from other areas to such schools; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
15 department study and recommend changes in law to require that
16 the facilities of closed schools be provided without charge to
17 charter schools; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
19 department report its findings and recommendations to the
20 interim legislative education study committee no later than
21 November 1, 2007; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
23 transmitted to the secretary of public education.